

# Academic



## English

The academic year began with the eagerly anticipated visit of the Travelling Book Fair. This provides an opportunity for all the children in the Prep School to purchase books with their English class and the school also benefits from commission in the form of books for the library. We were also able to make a book donation to a local children's charity. The school is fortunate to have a large number of sets of class readers to suit the different age groups and this year, books read in class have included: 'Lord of the Flies', 'Of Mice and Men', 'Holes', 'Wolf Brother', 'Clockwork', 'The Snow Goose' and 'The Kingdom by the Sea'. Reading remains a vital part of the curriculum.

In November, a very moving Remembrance Service took place in the theatre and children from Years 7 and 8 read some of their own war poems which they had prepared in class. The children in Years 7 and 8 had previously studied the poems of writers such as Owen and Sassoon and had written their own poems, a selection of which is available in the archives. Below is a particularly poignant one by **Isabelle Thomas, 7G**

### A letter from my Father

*I got a letter from my father today,  
He got sent to war a month ago.  
This is the first time I've heard from him since.  
My father wrote in the letter:  
Creeping, crawling rats and bugs  
Scuttling over my face.  
Itchy, scratchy lice  
Very close friends, sticking to your skin.  
Thick gloopy mud  
Making you slip and slide and fall in the dark, dank trench.*

*I imagine my daddy fighting out there,  
With all the fellow others.  
I thought it was good to fight for your country,  
Now I think maybe, just maybe, I was wrong.*

*I got a letter from my father today,  
He got sent to war two months ago.  
I've heard from him once since.  
My father wrote in the letter:  
Gas, gas, gas everywhere.  
So you can't see or think or hear through coughs.  
Gas slipping, falling into your lungs, chest and brain.  
Burning them into ash.  
Through your screeching, never ending pain,  
It never stops.  
Do I have to die?*



The standards expected of the children when they sit their Common Entrance or scholarship exams are demanding. Much work is obviously done in the classroom to prepare them but the over riding aim continues to be to give the children the necessary tools of their language to be able to use it with confidence and enjoyment in a variety of different situations and for a variety of different purposes. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively is a vital skill for all the children to learn.



*I imagine my daddy fighting out there,  
With all the fellow others.  
I thought it was good to fight for your country,  
Now I think maybe, just maybe, I was wrong.*

*I got a letter from my father today.  
He got sent to war two months ago.  
I've only heard from him twice since.  
My father wrote in the letter:  
The shelling, the shelling, the shelling  
It's coming closer all the time!  
It won't go away. It's stalking me.  
Ear piercing, numb minding, maddening,  
Whistling death just waiting to get me.  
Coming. Coming. Coming....Whoosh.  
Dead but not dead.*

*I imagine my daddy fighting out there,  
With all the fellow others.  
I thought it was good to fight for your country,  
Now I know I was...  
Wrong.*

**Isabelle Thomas**

